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# Varsities fear lack of intake over new MUET requirements

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Prof Datuk Dr Mohamed Mustafa Ishak, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) vice-chancellor

**ALORSETAR:** Local universities may face a drop in the number of students enrolling for several courses following the introduction of new entry requirements for the Malaysian University English Test (MUET).

According to Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Mohamed Mustafa Ishak, this was because the new entrance requirement, which comes into effect next year, would require students to attain a Band 2 to 5 in MUET, depending on the course of study.

He said at present about 30 per cent of students in local universities achieved Band 3, 4 and 5 in MUET, while the remainder had Band 1 and 2.

"Previously, the minimum requirement was Band 1 for students taking arts programmes and they would take an English class for a specified period," he told reporters when met at the Post-

Budget 2015 Dialogue here.

He said the Education Ministry should conduct a detailed study on ways to produce students who were proficient in English so that they could be accepted into local universities.

Mohamed Mustafa said the use of English in Mathematics and Science subjects was good as it would ensure students studied and mastered the language well.

"The ministry also does not have to bring down the passing grade of MUET because it is important to ensure the standard of English used in universities. There is no point lowering the passing grade of Band 2 because this means they have failed to master the language," he said.

He said he hoped the ministry would implement the move successfully so that students entering universities would be proficient in English.

"We at the university level can improve the skills of the students

from Band 1 to 2 and so on. We conduct English classes for them to improve their command of the language," he said.

Last Friday, while tabling Budget 2015, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak announced that beginning next year, the general entry requirement into public institutes of higher learning which required students to achieve a minimum level of Band 1 in MUET would be raised so that students would be more confident and proficient in English.

The new minimum entry requirement for MUET for entry into arts and social science courses has been raised to Band 2 (graduation requirement fixed at Band 3); science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) at Band 3 (graduation requirement of Band 4); while Band 4 has been fixed for law and medical studies (graduation requirement of Band 5). — Bernama